

THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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SEBASTIAN STROME.

BY JULIAN HAWTHORNE.

CHAPTER XV. STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS.

ALL manner of fantastic surmises as to the probable object of Mrs. Strome's visit flitted through Mary Dene's mind, while she was waiting for her to appear. Did she come with reproaches or with apologies? to console or to complain? The minute, or less, during which the young heiress was left in uncertainty, was yet time enough for her to become deeply agitated: a sign how seriously her nervous balance had been upset in the course of the last week.

She stood in the middle of the room, in an attitude of forced composure, ready to become either haughty and repellent, or otherwise, as the conduct of her visitor might give her the cue. She hoped that she would be able to keep her voice calm and natural; to betray herself before this woman would be humiliation indeed. An hour ago she had thought of Mrs. Strome as one capable of affording her the best protection against the consequences of her own recklessness; but the one of all others for whom, nevertheless, it was folly to hope. Now that, against all probability, Mrs. Strome had come, Mary foreboded in her, not a protector, but a fault-finder. What mother would not vindicate her son at cost of whatever injustice to others?

The door was opened, and Mrs. Strome's slender and small figure crossed the threshold. She turned back her long black veil, and Mary saw that her countenance was full of simple tenderness and sympathy. Mrs. Strome continued to come forward,

holding out her little black-gloved hands, and meeting Mary's eyes with a faint smile that seemed to have caught something of her husband's benignity. All Mary's painful pride fell from her. With a quick piteous catching of her breath she hurried to meet this woman who was to have been her mother, and took her in her arms.

The greeting meant so much for both that it was a long time before any articulate words were spoken. They stood with their arms round each other, no doubt thinking a great deal of many things, and tacitly soothing each other with little caressing movements, and cheek laid against cheek. At last Mary took the other's hand and led her to the sofa, and having made her sit down there, seated herself on a hassock at her feet. She divined that Mrs. Strome might have had some misgivings as to the manner in which she would be received at Dene Hall; and it was her instinctive effort to make her feel that her coming was a kind and gracious act. On occasions such as this instincts and intuitions, and that subtle balance of sensibilities which is called tact, are better than the best judiciousness.

"I thought I must see you, dear," said Mrs. Strome at length.

"I am glad you were able to come," Mary answered.

"We have both had our loss—I as well as you; so I thought I had a right to be with you."

"I hoped for you; but I did not dare to hope much."

"I could not be comforted until I had tried to comfort you."

"You have had the most to bear," said Mary, realising this now for the first time; for grief that has had no outlet is apt to magnify itself.

"I have had thirty years of happiness: nothing can take them away from me. You have lived only twenty years in your whole life. When I thought how rich I was, I was ashamed; for the hardest part is that I cannot give any of those riches to those I love."

"Oh, if you can say that you love me!" said Mary, resting her forehead on Mrs. Strome's knee.

"My dear, I do, with my whole heart," answered the other, pressing Mary's head between her hands. After this there was a silence, during which both the women quietly shed tears—quietly, lest they should add to each other's distress. When Mary lifted her face again, she had found that there is a consolation for grief which is independent of any reasons and better than any. She was no longer spiritually alone: she was delivered from that solitude in which the peril of madness lurks. And now that the hardness had melted from her heart, and the wildness in her brain had been assuaged, she understood how near that peril had been. It seems, sometimes, as if a little love were worth more than all the money and intellect in the world.

"How do you know how to be so good to me?" said Mary, in her low deep tones.

It was a question only in form. In meaning it was the wonder of a refreshed heart at finding itself refreshed; which, to the patient, always appears miraculous. But no one wishes to have a true miracle explained, its virtue is that it transcends explanation.

"I am glad you find me good, dear," Mrs. Strome said; "I have not found myself so. But I know the good Lord sometimes makes his own good felt through his imperfect creatures. It would be a sad world if he did not."

"I don't think I can feel God's goodness," said Mary in a low voice, looking down; and presently she added, lower still, "I am not resigned. Are you?"

Mrs. Strome did not immediately reply, so that at last Mary raised her eyes half apprehensively to her face. But the older woman was not looking horror struck. She wore an abstracted expression, which had become more common with her since her husband's death, and is often noticeable in those who have outlived what they held most dear; but she now met Mary's enquiring gaze with a certain benign gravity that had almost the influence of a smile, and said, with a little hesitation:

"I would not think about that, dear. Sometimes we do not know the right names of our feelings. I have lived along while, and I find resignation a greater mystery than when I was young. It comes to us, not because we ask for it, or question ourselves about it; but we learn that God permits compensations. To be resigned seems to mean almost the same as to understand; and yet we do not understand; we only feel that God does."

"I do not see how some losses can be made good again," said Mary slowly.

"Neither do I. It does not seem intended that we should ever really recover anything we lose in this world. The hurts that our sins do us are never cured; and bereavements are for ever."

"That may be just, but it does not seem kind."

"Our Heavenly Father does not play fast and loose with us, dear Mary. He dignifies our deeds and sufferings by making them irrevocable; otherwise we should not be strong enough for immortality."

"I do not like to think of that—of eternity."

"We shall not find eternity so long as time, I am sure. It can only mean that we shall be more alive. You would not object, would you, to be more loved and more loving than is possible in this world?"

"But are life and love the same thing?"

Mrs. Strome softly passed her hand twice or thrice over Mary's hair. "I can only say that I have found them so," she answered.

"But you do not know how wicked I am," said Mary suddenly. "I cannot see into the spirit of things as you can. Heaven is shut against me."

"No, no, my dear; you have suffered a great wrong and outrage, and I think you mistake your indignation at that for resentment against the Lord. But He, I am sure, sees how it is with you, though you do not yet. If you will let me, I will make a confession to you. When all in one moment I found myself deprived of my husband, and of my belief and pride in my son, I was resentful too. I said I could never forgive; and afterwards, when that first anger had passed away, I wanted to die and get away from all troubles. But last night I talked with him—with my son, and now I feel that I must live, and be thankful for my life. That which pains us in this world is whatever disappoints

and humiliates our selfish hopes and pride. But selfishness cannot enter heaven; and the only way to make us lay it aside is to make us see how unheavenly it is. If we were always gratified in all our desires and expectations we should take them across the grave with us, and it would be too late to be rid of them then. The Lord himself, you know, has compared man to a vine: he must be pruned of all that is superfluous and morbid; so that the strength that would have been wasted in such perverted growths may be concentrated in what is of use. The vine is not angry and does not die because it is pruned; and so, last night, I felt that the pain I had suffered would be wasted if I let it stop my life instead of strengthening it. And do not say that you are wicked, my dear," continued Mrs. Strome with great gentleness, "for it is the same as to accuse the Lord of willing your destruction. The wickedness that you feel is the wickedness that He is taking away from you. If you were wicked I don't think you would have received me as you did to-day—almost as if it were you that had done the injury. In a little while, if you will wait, you will find that heaven is not shut against you. When God takes away what seems to make us rich, it is only that He may give us what will really make us so."

In speaking thus, Mrs. Strome gave evidence of the courage which ventures to disregard the cynical maxim that the common places of consolation are unavailing. If in one sense anything may be called commonplace, in another sense nothing is so. It is the intention and the manner, never the bare words, however eloquent, that have value. The will to give comfort is the only comfort worth giving.

But Mary Dene had within her consciousness the knowledge of a certain fact which sorely obstructed her reception of Mrs. Strome's conclusions. If this interview had but preceded that fatal half hour with Fawley, all might have been well. But in her rebellious intolerance of pain, Mary had sought to rid herself of it, not by the slow and sure medicine of patience and belief which Mrs. Strome had proved and advocated; but by the sudden and deadly narcotic of self-degradation. Now that the mischief was done, she could perceive not only its full ugliness, but, what was even worse, its futility. The spiritual numbness which she had bought so dear would not last long; and when the pain

recommenced it would be pain of a less noble kind than before, and must be stifled by still more ignoble means. But where would be the end of a course so ill begun? Mary knew that women who had started in the world with prospects as bright and traditions as proud as hers, had yet lived to take to themselves all manner of sin and vileness, and had died at last further than ever from the cowardly peace which they had debauched soul and body to gain. Was this to be the way with her? She had taken the first step—she was entangled. Was the entanglement destined to be fatal?

"So do not you lose heart, my dear," resumed Mrs. Strome after the pause had lasted a good while. "Though his mother says it, you will have a worthier fate than if you had married him!"

Mary could not sit still any longer. She rose from her place at Mrs. Strome's knees, and after standing still for a moment, she turned and walked away to the end of the room, and back to Mrs. Strome again.

"You do not know what I have done," she said in a labouring tone. "I hardly knew myself until now. If my father had been alive he would have despised me! Oh, I am glad he died! Though perhaps if he had lived I should not have dared to lower myself so much."

Mrs. Strome sat quiet, as it was her nature to be, and made no attempt to speak; but she sought Mary's troubled eyes with hers, and when she had met them she endeavoured to put into her glance all the encouragement and sympathy that were in her soul. She thought it probable that Mary, with the exaggerative tendency of an ardent spirit, was magnifying the importance of something not really so serious. Of Mary's essential nobility and goodness she felt all the certainty that could be implanted by a lifelong knowledge of her. What the girl chiefly needed was protection from the vehemence of her own prepossessions against herself; and such protection Mrs. Strome was tenderly anxious to afford her. She charged herself with almost a mother's responsibility regarding this orphan heiress; for she had ardently desired, if not actively promoted, her late relations with Sebastian—believing doubtless that their union would be as much for Mary's happiness as for his, but yet prompted to this belief by an overweening confidence in the impeccability of her own flesh and blood. The spectacle of Mary's suffering was, therefore, a phase of Mrs.

Strome's punishment; and the refined sense of justice which was inwoven with the woman's nature, as well as the compassionate instincts which her own anguish had awakened to special activity, alike stimulated her to lavish her whole vase of precious ointment—of loving devotion—upon Mary's wounds. And Mrs. Strome's vase, although not outwardly pretentious, had within it the essence of a thousand heavenly flowers.

Mary, at no time much of a diplomatist, felt herself pointedly unequal to introducing her ungainly news under a graceful vestiture of words. The truth must come out naked, if it was to come at all. With an intense feeling of self-contempt, manifested in her voice by a harsh abruptness of intonation, and otherwise by hot cheeks and a straining together of the hands, she made the disclosure. "Selim Fawley wanted me to marry him," she said, "and I said I would!" Here she stopped short.

Mrs. Strome was fully taken by surprise. But she rapidly reflected that Mary might have been carried away by a sudden impulse of mistaken self-sacrifice. She had not forgotten that Fawley had been her suitor before.

"He made you believe he cared so much for you?" she said.

"It was not that; it was not for his sake I did it; I didn't care or think whether he loved me or not. I accepted him because—I don't know why! I was afraid of myself, and angry. I wanted—oh, Mrs. Strome, I wanted to be disgraced!" This was said with bitter emphasis.

"How could he have asked you—so soon!" said Mrs. Strome sadly.

"Oh, don't blame him! It was I—I almost asked him! I led him on. He could not have done it of himself. Well, is not Heaven shut against me now?"

"When was this?" asked the other after a pause.

"Now—just before you came."

"Then it is not quite settled perhaps? You may reconsider it. Is he in the house still? Call him in here and tell him . . . or let me tell him for you."

Mrs. Strome spoke with great urgency, rising and laying her hand on Mary's arm. She saw that if the mistake was ever to be rectified it must be done now, while the words were still, as it were, warm. So long as the engagement was not noised abroad, it might be revoked: at a later stage, regard for Mary's fair fame would

forbid any interference. This then was the critical moment. Everything depended upon Mary's immediate decision. "Let me speak to him!" Mrs. Strome repeated.

"No!" replied Mary, lingering on the word. "I will not have it changed."

There was a chair near her, she sank into it languidly, and pressed her cheeks between her hands. She had comprehended, no less clearly than Mrs. Strome, the possibilities of the occasion; and though her refusal to profit by them had been prompt, it had not been hasty. Often at crucial epochs of our lives, when we should have anticipated much doubt and hesitation, we discover that the question was answered for us years ago by the tacit decree of slowly-formed principles—principles which, at the time of their formation, knew not what momentous judgment they should one day deliver. In Mary's mind a species of fatalism probably operated, combined with a pride of consistency: her word once given should be kept at whatever cost; and in the loss of so much that had made her respectable in her own eyes, she perhaps derived a gloomy sort of consolation from this resolve. An all-important resolve indeed it was, since it would make its influence felt over all her future life. But there is something stimulating to the spirit in the consideration that a mere act of its volition can involve consequences so real and far-reaching; and being thus brought to a recognition of its power, it discovers likewise a greater aptitude for exerting it.

Mrs. Strome did not undertake to combat Mary's determination: for though it had been her first impulse to suggest the only available means of escaping from a false position, she was quite able to appreciate the stoicism that would refuse deliverance obtainable only at the cost of honour. On the other hand, however, she could not conscientiously adopt a rose-coloured view of the situation, and go about to reconcile Mary to her self-invited lot by attempting to make light of its difficulties. The outlook appeared dark enough: Mary had herself admitted—what, indeed, could have been divined beforehand—that there was no pretence of love on her side of the transaction; and from what Mrs. Strome knew of Fawley, it did not seem likely that he would develop resources of affection at once so ample and so discriminating as to compensate for Mary's lack.

But because the threads with which the

web of a life is to be woven are sombre, it does not necessarily follow that they may not be nobly and beautifully combined. Mrs. Strome had not been for thirty years the minister's wife without finding out that the best part of existence is not in the materials which have to be worked upon, but in the aim and spirit in which the work is done. Furthermore, other things being equal, there is more opportunity for strengthening the moral fibre when the odds are against us, than when they are in our favour; and it was upon some such ground as this that any further efforts in Mary's behalf were to be based. Mrs. Strome, having come to Dene Hall with the fixed resolution to do some good to the mistress of it, was not to be disheartened by the discovery that there was more good to be done than she had expected.

So she resumed her seat quietly, and let Mary see by her manner that she was prepared to face the new situation with confidence. It is always an encouragement to a person in trouble if he sees that his friend does not regard the situation as desperate. And though it is undoubtedly true that each soul must, in the last resort, meet its enemy and fight its battle apart from all human aid—and even, at the acme of conflict, apart from all consciousness of Divine aid also—yet there is real help in the remembrance that some other human being has estimated the chances, and has not found them incline overwhelmingly to the wrong side. We behold a hostile monster making towards us through space, and we are frightened for want of data whereby to measure its dimensions. If now an uncompromised spectator appears upon the scene, the much needed scale of proportions is supplied at once: our monster is so much bigger or so much smaller than a man; and whether it be thus resolved into a gnat or into a fiery dragon, we have at least been relieved from the one intolerable fear that is born of uncertainty.

"Perhaps," began Mary wistfully, "it is not a thing that I should have spoken to you about at all. But I have done so much that is wrong lately, that I seem to be beginning to forget what is right."

"I have always thought that your character had a great deal of strength in it," replied Mrs. Strome, ignoring the letter of Mary's speech, and answering the spirit of it, "and by doing this you have given it a task worthy of it; I mean, by engaging yourself to Mr. Fawley. I am not making

any criticism on Mr. Fawley in particular," she added with a faint smile: "I know very little about him, except that he always seems pleasant; but I was thinking only of your feeling towards him, your not being what is called in love with him."

"Of course he could not expect that," observed Mary naively.

"Most men expect a great deal from their wives: sometimes more than even a loving wife is quite prepared to give."

"I do not suppose that Selim will act in that way," Mary said, in a tone that seemed to imply that she was very certain he would not. "I shall try to be a good wife to him; at least, if I can be good at all: but—it seems to me—I rather think—the being loved would be the hardest part!"

"I fancy you might become reconciled to that," returned Mrs. Strome, not without a touch of dryness. "And you will find so much to do on your own side that you will probably have little leisure to ask yourself whether you are dissatisfied. Your marriage will not be the less holy a covenant because your husband is not all you could have wished."

"Is it not love that makes it holy?"

"Yes, my dear; but you will have more occasion to exercise love than if you had married after your own heart."

"How can that be?" asked Mary, slowly turning her eyes upon her visitor.

"A wife must love no one else than her husband."

"I know that, and I accept it," said Mary after a pause. "But it does not follow that I love him."

"Not with an actual personal love, Mary; but you must love him! There are two kinds of love, the love that we bear to people for their own sake, and the love that we bear to them for the sake of the Lord. God tells us first to love Him, and then to love our neighbour. Nobody can be more your neighbour than the man who has married you. And love for the neighbour means the love of doing him good because he is God's creature."

"That sort of love is as good as no love at all. Nobody would care to be loved except for himself. I am sure I should not!"

"If that were so, my dear, then it would be well for you that you were not married after your own heart. For you would have loved your husband selfishly; you would have loved him because of the selfish pleasure you took in his enjoyment of your love; and so you would have been liable to

see things through a false medium, and to call evil good."

"That is a strange way of thinking! It is as much as to say that we should love no one more than another; and that a mother should not love her own child more than any one else's. Did you love your husband so? Did you think of him only as God's creature, and not as a man who, just because he was himself and not another, was more than all other men to you, and more than all the world?"

The vehemence of this speech, and the personal application that it contained, caused Mrs. Strome's hands to tremble and the colour to show faintly in her cheeks. And the perception she had of Mary's displeasure, made the tears, which had never been very far away at any period of this interview, gather painfully in her eyes. Mary saw this, and was remorseful; but her opposition was not the less aroused; and since she was not prepared to withdraw what she had said, and knew not how to withdraw the manner in which she had said it, she remained silent.

It was not until after several moments that Mrs. Strome spoke.

"I think you misunderstood what I meant," she said in an uncertain voice. "I loved my husband—more than any man—but I tried to love him first of all as my neighbour. God has put in us the love of self, but He means that we should keep within it a love towards Him, and let it be directed and ruled by that higher love. If my husband had asked me to do evil for his sake—I do not know, Mary, for I loved him very much—but I hope I should not have been so selfish as to have done it. And a mother must love her son; and even if he does evil, she must still love him more than others' sons, who are better than he: but it would be love to help him to put away the evil; and it would be so great because I am his mother, and all the sacredness of my marriage is bound up in him!" These last sentences were uttered with great agitation; and then Mrs. Strome turned aside, and covered her eyes with her hands, and said brokenly: "Oh, God forgive me! I have been a proud selfish woman! Oh, God forgive me if I have loved them too much!—they have been taken from me!"

Before this piteous outburst Mary's hardness dissolved like wax in the fire. She breathed forth an inarticulate, wavering murmur of sorrow and sympathy; and dropping to her knees by Mrs. Strome's

side, she once again took her to her heart. Both felt that thenceforth there could be no more misunderstandings between them.

"I did not mean to set myself up to dictate to you, dear," Mrs. Strome said presently. "I know how wrong I have been; but God has shown me myself, and I wanted to warn you, and help you not to become like me. It is the best use I can make of what I have been taught."

"I partly see what you would have me do," Mary answered, with a sense of solemnity. "I am not to enjoy my own life; I must not love a person until I have first loved God through him; and in the same way I must love a person because God is to be loved through him. Poor Selim! I wonder how he will like that."

"It will be a test for him as well as a trial for you. Dear Mary, your life will be much nobler than all the years of happiness I have had: and it will be happier too in the end."

"Well, I have not got to the end yet: and perhaps I shall never get there. But certainly I shall not be in much danger of the kind of temptation you have suffered from, in the meanwhile! What I don't see at present is, where the strength is to come from to carry out all this. I feel tired of it even before it has begun!"

This ended the interview, so far as any significant issues were concerned. When Mrs. Strome was at the vicarage again, she devoutly prayed that Mary might receive from heaven the strength that she had doubted of. But Mary, in the solitude of her boudoir, was regretting that she had not had weakness enough to ask for definite news of Sebastian.

THE CORRESPONDENCE OF MADAME.

AMONG the many female writers whose contributions to literature have been exclusively epistolary, few, if any, have bequeathed to posterity a more voluminous autographic legacy than Elizabeth Charlotte, Duchess of Orleans. It is doubtful, indeed, whether a more regular and indefatigable correspondent ever existed than this honest, outspoken German princess, who, in the course of the half century which elapsed between her marriage in 1671 and her death in 1722, seldom allowed a day to pass without its quota of letters addressed to various members of her family and other intimate friends, this diurnal task frequently consisting of no less than

fifty or sixty pages. As might be expected, the majority of these epistles, hastily indited and as rapidly despatched to all parts of Europe, often contain the same information, and almost the same phrases: the style, even in German, is careless in the extreme, and on the few occasions when she was compelled to write in French, she betrayed a lamentable ignorance of orthography and grammar.

Daughter of the Elector Palatine Charles Louis, and married in her nineteenth year, after having embraced the Catholic religion, to Philip, Duke of Orleans, brother of Louis the Fourteenth, Madame, as she was generally styled in right of her position, was never thoroughly at home in the atmosphere of Versailles. Transplanted from the dull decorum of a German principality into the midst of a brilliant and luxurious court, she rarely participated in its gaieties, and, unless in deference to the express desire of the King, to whom she was sincerely attached, and of whom she invariably speaks in terms of the highest respect, she appeared as little in public as possible. This predilection for retirement was partly attributable to her natural disinclination for society, and partly to her hatred of Madame de Maintenon, whose company she studiously avoided whenever practicable, and whose preference for the children of Madame de Montespan, especially of the Duc du Maine to her own son, the future regent, she never forgave. Her cordial dislike, indeed, of Scarron's widow is evident from innumerable passages of her letters, and the same aversion is manifested by her in a greater or lesser degree to all the illegitimate children of Louis the Fourteenth, even including Mdlle. de Blois, the wife of her dearly beloved son Philip. In one respect, perhaps, she acted wisely in withdrawing herself from the ceremonial gatherings of the court, for she was certainly little qualified to adorn them; if we may judge from her portraits* and from the unanimous testimony of her contemporaries, she must unquestionably have been one of the ugliest women of her time, and, as she does not scruple more than once to inform us, was herself perfectly aware of the fact. "There was nothing feminine about Madame," says Saint Simon; "she was courageous, frank, straightforward, kind-hearted, generous,

dignified in bearing, and German to the back-bone, and, with all this, absurdly tenacious of her rights and privileges; perpetually occupied with her correspondence, she was unsocial and discourteous in her manner, prompt to take offence, utterly without tact, though by no means deficient in intelligence, repulsively ill-favoured, but capable of friendship as devoted as it was sincere." She survived her husband twenty-one years, and breathed her last December the 8th, 1722, a few months after attaining her seventieth year. Of the three children of the marriage, one, the Duc de Valois, died in infancy; the Duchesse of Lorraine, in 1744; and Philip Duke of Orleans, Regent of France, December the 21st, 1723, one year after the decease of his mother.

Anything approaching a complete collection of the letters of Madame has hitherto been, and will probably continue to be, a literary desideratum. That most of her unpublished writings have been lost or destroyed there can be little doubt, especially the portions addressed to Leibnitz and the Queens of Spain and Sardinia; her correspondence, however, with her sisters Louise and Amélie, and other members of her family, has fortunately been preserved, and was published for the first time at Stuttgard in 1843. This work, together with the fragments previously printed in 1789 under the title of "anecdotes of the French court," have served as the basis of the most correct edition which has as yet been given to the public, translated and arranged in chronological order by M. Gustave Brunet in 1857; since which date M. Amédée Rolland has edited a supplementary volume, containing the correspondence of the Duchess with her aunt Sophia of Hanover. The following extracts from this curious collection have been selected either as affording some insight into the peculiar ideas and opinions of the writer, or as recording events and gossip, historical or anecdotal, likely to interest the general reader. To avoid repetition, it may be stated that the letters quoted, unless otherwise specified, are addressed to Madame's sister, the Countess Palatine Louise.

"May 14, 1695.

"Dancing is entirely out of fashion nowadays. Here, in France, no sooner are people collected together than they begin to play lansquenet; the young folks prefer it to dancing. I do neither; I am too old to dance, and I never play, for two good

* The best of these, a perfect gem of the engraver's art, is the one by Drevet after Rigaud, forming the heading of the funeral oration delivered in the church of Laon, March 18, 1723.

reasons, first, because I have no money, and secondly, because I have no taste for it. They play fabulously high here, and the gamblers are like madmen; one sets up a howl, another dashes his fist on the table till the whole room shakes, and a third blasphemes so fearfully as to make one's hair stand on end. They all seem out of their senses, and are horrible to look at."

"Saint Cloud, June 21, 1697.

"I received your letter safely, but could not answer it, not being expert at writing with the left hand; and M^{lle}. de Rathsamhausen spells so badly that I had no wish to dictate to her. You shall hear what happened to me. A month ago I went wolf-hunting with the Dauphin; it had rained, and the ground was slippery. While we were riding along a wolf jumped up close to my horse, who began to rear, missed his footing and fell, bringing my arm in contact with a large stone, and putting it out of joint. The King's surgeon was of the party, but his horse having lost a shoe he had stayed behind; so, hearing from a peasant that two leagues from the spot where we were lived a village barber famous for his skill in setting arms and legs, I drove thither, underwent the operation, and came home. As soon as I arrived, my surgeon and Monsieur's examined the arm, and I fancy were not pleased when they saw how cleverly the poor man had set it; since then my hand has swollen, and until to-day I have been unable to use it."

"Saint Cloud, June 17, 1698.

"Although living in the centre of a court, I pass my time chiefly in retirement, and often remain during an entire day alone in my private apartments, reading and writing. If people come to see me, I cut short their visit as soon as possible, and return to my solitude. Four times a week I send off my packets by the post; from six to eight I drive out with Monsieur and my ladies in waiting; three times a week I go to Paris, and once or twice I hunt."

"1698.

"You must have a very imperfect recollection of me if you have forgotten how ugly I am. I always was so, and my illness has not improved me. In shape I am as square as a cube; my skin is red, speckled with yellow, my hair is turning grey, and my nose and cheeks are pitted with the small-pox. Add to this a large mouth and bad teeth, and you have an exact description of my pretty face."

"Saint Cloud, June 23, 1699.

"Every one is talking of the counsellor's wife who caused her husband to be murdered, and of the courage with which she met her fate. She suffered horribly, for it was only after the sixth stroke of the axe that her head was severed from her body. The crowd at her execution was so great that a window was let for fifty louis. She was called Madame Tiquet, and her horoscope had foretold that if she escaped death at the hands of a man of the same name as her own, she would live long and happily. The strange part of the story is that her maiden name was Carlier, and the executioner who beheaded her was Carlier also."

"Versailles, March 2, 1709.

"I never remember a more deplorable season; the poor people are dying of cold like flies. Yesterday I heard a sad story of a woman who had stolen a loaf of bread, and was taken by the baker before the commissary of police. 'If you only knew the misery I am suffering,' she said, bursting into tears, 'you would not take this bread from me. I have three little children to feed; they are without clothes, and ask for bread, that is why I took the loaf.' The commissary accompanied her to the place where she lived, and found there the three little ones crouched in a corner, covered with rags, and shivering with cold. 'Where is your father?' he asked. 'He is behind the door,' replied one of the children. Curious to know what he was doing there, the commissary looked where he was told, and started back horror-struck. The poor wretch had hung himself in despair, and, what is worse, these things happen every day."

"Marly, August 5, 1713.

"Snuff-taking is a nasty habit, and I hope you do not practise it. Nothing is more disgusting than to see women plunge their fingers into the men's snuffboxes, as they do here."

"Fontainebleau, September 20, 1714.

"You fancy that my life is one continued series of amusement, but you are mistaken. I rise generally at nine, read three chapters of the Bible, dress and receive visitors. At noon I go to mass, and then dine quite alone, which is anything but agreeable, with people round me watching every morsel I put into my mouth; more especially as, though I have been forty-three years in this country, I have never been

able to accustom myself to the detestable cooking. After dinner I retire to my room, and read or write until the King's supper-hour, while my ladies in waiting are playing ombre or brelan. About nine or ten o'clock Madame d'Orléans, the Duchess de Berry or my son come and fetch me, and we take our places at table waiting for the King, who very often does not appear before half-past eleven. We then sup without speaking a word, the King enters his apartments, and we follow him. At half-past twelve he wishes us good night, I go to bed, and the Duchess (of Bourbon) sits down to cards until daybreak."

"Versailles, August 27, 1715.

"I must tell you that we witnessed yesterday the saddest and most touching spectacle imaginable. After having received the sacrament, the King sent for the Dauphin, gave him his benediction, and addressed a few words to him. He then asked to see me, the Duchess de Berry, and all his daughters and grand-children; he bade me adieu so affectionately that I could hardly maintain my composure. He requested me to remember him from time to time, adding that he thought I should do it willingly, as he was convinced that I had always loved him; he gave me his blessing, saying that he prayed I might be happy. I fell on my knees and kissed his hand, after which he embraced me, and then spoke to the others, enjoining them to live in union together. Thinking he said this on my account, I assured him that in this respect as in everything else, I should obey his Majesty as long as I lived; upon which he smiled and replied: 'I do not say this for you, there is no occasion for it, but for the other princesses.' He then bade farewell to all his attendants, recommending them to the care of my son, as the future regent of the kingdom. He is still alive, but grows weaker and weaker; Madame de Maintenon remains in his chamber night and day." (Louis the Fourteenth died September 1, 1715).

The following extract is from a letter addressed to M. de Harling, the husband of Madame's former governess in Hanover.

"December 3, 1715.

"The Chevalier de Saint George," the old Pretender, "is the best and most affable of human beings. One day he asked Lord Douglas: 'What can I do to secure the affection of my people?' 'Put yourself on board ship,' replied Douglas, 'take a dozen Jesuits with you, and on your arrival

order them to be hanged; nothing will please the English better.'"

"January 8, 1716.

"No two brothers were ever more different than the King and Monsieur; nevertheless, they were greatly attached to each other. The King was tall, with light brown hair, manly and extremely prepossessing in appearance; Monsieur, though by no means ugly, was very short, and had jet black hair, thick eyebrows, a long thin face, a large nose, a small mouth and bad teeth. He resembled a woman rather than a man, and cared neither for horses nor for hunting; his chief delight was to play cards, eat well, dance and dress; in a word, his tastes were exactly those of a woman. The King was fond of hunting, music and theatrical performances. Monsieur cared only for society and masked balls; the King was inclined to gallantry, whereas I do not believe that Monsieur was ever in love in his whole life."

"January 16, 1716.

"Madame de Maintenon was in the habit of saying ill-natured things about people to the King, so as to prevent him from attaching himself to anyone but her own creatures; they alone were represented as faultless. This was the more dangerous, inasmuch as such insinuations generally resulted in a decree of imprisonment or exile. Madame de Montespan never acted thus; when she had ridiculed an individual to her heart's content, she was satisfied, and the matter ended there."

"February 14, 1716.

"The Count of Nassau has lost twenty thousand francs at play with certain of our ladies. I am inclined to think there was some cheating going on, for they have a reputation that way."

"May 14, 1717.

"To-day I had a visit from my hero the Czar," Peter the Great, "and was much pleased with his manner, which is perfectly natural and unaffected. He speaks German badly, but talks sensibly and well, is polite to everyone, and very popular."

"August 13, 1717.

"A monk, on his way to Luzarche the other day, fell in with a stranger riding in the same direction, with whom he entered into conversation, and was charmed with the agreeable sallies of his companion. The latter, learning from the monk that he was in charge of a sum of money belonging to

his convent, and was proceeding thither, observed that he himself was likewise travelling towards that part of the country, and that by taking a short cut through the forest they would materially abridge their journey. When they were in the thick of the wood, the stranger dismounted from his horse, seized the monk's bridle, and with many threats insisted on his delivering up the money he had with him. 'I do not carry it about me,' replied the other; 'allow me to get off my horse, and I will call the lay-brother who follows me with the baggage and hand you over a thousand livres.'

"The stranger consented, and the monk, rejoining his attendant, took from him a purse containing the sum specified and also a pistol, which he hid in his sleeve; then, throwing the purse on the ground, he waited until the robber was in the act of stooping to pick it up, and shot him through the head. Hastening to the nearest village, he related what he had done to the authorities, and obtained permission for a troop of gens d'armes to accompany him to the spot, where they found the robber lying stone dead, with the purse by his side. Searching his person, they discovered in a secret pocket a whistle, which one of the party put to his mouth and blew with all his force; a few minutes after ten well-armed individuals arrived from different parts of the wood, and a combat ensued, which resulted in the death of two of the gang, and in the capture of the remainder."

"October 9, 1717.

"You will probably have heard that the Pope has caused Lord Peterborough to be arrested at Bologna, no one knows why. He appears to have gone about the town four days dressed as a woman; with all his cleverness, he sometimes acts like a madman. Some one asked him if it were true that the King of England had given orders to assassinate the Chevalier de Saint George, upon which he replied that the King would never have dreamt of such a thing, but that the Prince of Wales was quite capable of doing so."

"September 26, 1718.

"The Père Joseph was in great favour with Cardinal Richelieu, who consulted him in everything. One day, the Duke Bernard de Saxe-Weimar being present in the council chamber, the Père Joseph, pointing with his finger to different fortified places on a map, said to him: 'Monsieur, you will first take this town, then that one, and so on.' 'Towns are not

taken with fingers, Monsieur Joseph,' replied the Duke."

"December 5, 1718.

"The late King, Monsieur, the Dauphin and the Duc de Berry were enormous eaters. I have often seen the King eat four plates of different kinds of soup, a whole pheasant, a partridge, a dish of salad, two thick slices of ham, mutton flavoured with garlic, a plateful of pastry, and finish his repast with fruit and hard-boiled eggs."

"April 14, 1719.

"Montespan was fairer in complexion than La Vallière; she had a pretty mouth and good teeth, but the expression of her face was bold and designing. Her hair, hands and arms were perfect; but La Vallière had the advantage of being clean in her person, whereas Montespan was quite the reverse."

"St. Cloud, April 27, 1719.

"The Duke de Richelieu is an arch-profligate, and a coward to boot; he believes in nothing, is ambitious and false, and neither has done nor ever will do a single good action. I cannot understand why all the ladies rave so about him. He has a good figure, beautiful hair, an oval face, and very expressive eyes; but he looks what he is—an impertinent coxcomb."

"October 1, 1719.

"Those who speak ill of M. Law do it out of jealousy, for we have seen nothing like him yet. He has paid the late king's debts, and lowered the taxes, which pressed heavily on the people. Wood only costs half what it did, and wine and meat are allowed to enter Paris free of duty; so it is not to be wondered at if he is popular. He is so much in request that he cannot rest night or day: one of our duchesses went so far as to kiss his hand in public, so it is not surprising if other ladies follow her example. Nevertheless, I would not be in his place for all the gold in the world, for no soul in purgatory was ever more tormented. A certain lady, who had failed in obtaining admittance to the great man's presence, ingeniously contrived that her carriage should break down at his door; and on his rushing out, imagining from her cries that her arms or legs were broken, she laughed in his face, and asked him for shares. Another, Madame de Bouchu, hearing that he was dining with Madame de Simiane (lady-in-waiting of the Duchess d'Orléans), instructed her servants to raise an alarm of fire. All the guests hurried down into the court-yard, M. Law among

them, upon which Madame de Bouchu profited by the opportunity, and got what she wanted."

"March 24, 1721.

"St. François de Sales, the founder of the order of les Filles de Sainte-Marie, was in his youth an intimate friend of the Maréchal de Villeroi, father of the present marshal. His old companion could never be persuaded to call him anything but M. de Sales; and, someone happening to mention him in conversation, remarked, 'I was delighted to hear that they had made a Saint of M. de Sales. He was fond of loose talk and cheated at cards, but I never knew a more thorough gentleman, nor so silly a one.'"

"May 8, 1722.

"The late king had been taught to believe that no one who had not received instruction in religious matters from the Jesuits could possibly be saved, and there was no surer method of injuring a person in his opinion than by accusing him of being either a Huguenot or a Jansenist. My son was once on the point of admitting into his household an individual whose mother was a well-known Jansenist, and the Jesuits lost no time in informing the king of the fact. 'Can this be true, nephew,' asked the latter, 'that you are about to employ a Jansenist?' 'Sire,' replied my son, 'I never thought of such a thing. On the contrary, I can assure your Majesty that he is certainly no Jansenist, for he believes in nothing whatever.' 'Oh,' said the king, 'in that case, do as you like. If you are certain he is no Jansenist, I have nothing to say against him.'"

"Paris, November 29, 1722.

(Written nine days before her death.)

"This will be but a short letter. I am gradually sinking, and have not closed my eyes all night. Yesterday morning we lost our poor Maréchale, "de Clérambaut," to my great affliction. Her death was not unexpected, for she was in her eighty-eighth year; but it is not the less painful to separate from one who has been a good friend for more than half a century. I am too ill to write more. Could you see in what a deplorable state I am, you would understand that I shall be glad when all is over!"

HURLINGHAM.

SHOULD you accept my invitation and accompany me to Hurlingham Park to see the polo, the pigeon shooting, the lawn

tennis, and fine company, will you please disabuse your mind of the superstition that such objectionable qualities as vulgarity and bad taste exist in the world, or that poverty is anything more important than the shadow of a cloud racing down a sun-lit hill-side?

As we travel along the pretty Fulham lanes and pass through the gates of Hurlingham Park and under the avenue of spreading chesnut-trees up to the doors of the old-fashioned house upon the banks of silver-streaming Thames close to Putney Bridge, we leave behind us want and squalor, the fierce passions of the race for wealth, the pretensions of monied ignorance, and the envy of democracy. And thenceforward we find ourselves in a region of sweet green lawns, parterres of flowers, human strength and grace, and picnics à la Watteau; with a plenitude of duchesses, a profusion of four-horse coaches, and such a moving mass of many-tinted soft stuffs, gracious faces and stately figures as together make up the paradise of fashion.

Ten years ago Hurlingham Park—consisting of some forty acres of pleasure grounds—was the private residence of Mr. Naylor, as before his time it had been the home of the Horsley Palmers, once opulent bankers. From Mr. Naylor the place passed into possession of Mr. Frank Heathcote, a popular sportsman, who, in conjunction with a committee of noblemen and gentlemen, established the Hurlingham Club for the purpose of providing a ground for pigeon shooting, &c.; and for the entertainment of persons "received in general society," their relations and friends. The Hurlingham Club may be said to have grown indirectly out of the pigeon shooting meetings which formerly took place at Hornsey Wood House, or from a still more remote origin, the sports of the old Red House at Battersea.

The club was founded in the year 1868, and at present consists of shooting, polo, and non-shooting members. The payment of a modest subscription entitles to all the privileges of the club inclusive of the right to introduce ladies; the members being individually responsible to the committee for the status in society of their visitors. The rules of the club, sixty in number, and consisting of nine small octavo pages of closely printed matter, are at once liberal and strict; embracing almost every conceivable safeguard, likely to insure the comfort and good behaviour of members. The committee for the current year includes

His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales; and among the list of members, numbering over twelve hundred, may be found many of the brightest and most distinguished names of the proudest aristocracy in Europe.

The comforts of the club-house include a ladies' drawing-room, opening into a beautiful conservatory filled with choice flowers; a morning room for luncheons, and a handsome general dining-room capable of seating a hundred and fifty guests. The chef is an artist; and when the fatigues of the day are ended and the many coloured waxcandles lighted along the vista of snowy table-linen, the favoured children of fortune may enjoy the bland, yet solemn, happiness of a good dinner well served.

Far from the madding crowd, close to Edmund Spenser's sweet Thames, "there in a meadow by the river's side," when the stars come out in the summer sky, and the moon catches the high tops of towering elms and lights the long dark shafts of poplar, and rests graciously upon acacia, iris, and the spreading beech, even the upper classes may be forgiven if—after dinner—eyes grow brighter, voices softer, and the sense that we live in a delightful world steals over those who have no reason to think otherwise.

Maybe little Dan Cupid, with his bow fresh polished and his wings brushed to their glossiest sheen, hides among the shadowy bushes, and shoots keen arrows right through the armour of etiquette. But the high-bred heroines scorn to show a wound, and the sporting heroes are, or seem to be, invulnerable.

I said that the grounds of Hurlingham Park consist of forty acres, as originally they did. But latterly the club has taken a five years' lease from Lord Ranelagh of the adjoining property, including a fine old-fashioned house and twenty acres of pleasure ground containing a large lake, which later on will be utilized for boating parties, and still later, with the permission of Jack Frost, will be turned into a skating-rink after the example of the Cercle des Patineurs in the Bois de Boulogne of ever delightful Paris. By-the-way, I should mention that all foreign members of the Paris Patineur Club are regarded as honorary shooting members of the Hurlingham, unless they reside more than two months in England.

On the river front of the club-house broad lawns with tennis-courts spread to the water's edge; and the people on the

steam-boats passing by on their way up the river stare with eyes full of wonder tempered with approval at the fine folk enjoying themselves. And here upon the lawn o' sunny afternoons the persons in "general society" recline in Madeira chairs at little tables, and eat bread and butter and drink tea poured out of small brown earthenware tea-pots, with the most engaging, though withal aristocratic, rusticity. Hither comes Sir Courtly Tawnytuft, fresh from doveslaughter, to take a dish of tea, and dangle after that beautiful brunette, Lady Pearl-powder; while Beauty's dowager mamma beams through her rouge and over her gold lorgnette at the artless compliments of the gallant shooter. Hither come the well-pleased and tight-garmented Dianas of the lawn tennis-courts for refreshment after labour; and their flannel-clad cavaliers wait upon them with all the assiduity and more than the grace of hospital nurses.

The many and bright flowers, the small brown tea-pots, the wind-blown branches, the bread and butter, the tight skirts, the flowing river, the rippling laughter, the light clouds, the summer weather, the poudre de rose and high heels suggest the primitive, if not the simple, happiness of life before the incident of the apple.

But hark! Above the small talk is heard the sharp report of the breech-loader, and we are reminded to try our skill at the traps. Close to the polo field, and encompassed by a high wooden paling is the shooting enclosure, in shape a rounded triangle—if such a Hybernicism of description may be permitted—and about seven acres in extent. Within the enclosure are a loading-shed, a pavilion, and what for want of a better expression may be called a small grand stand, all situated behind the scorer's seat, and in rear of the shooter.

At a distance of thirty-three yards from the scorer, who sits at a little wooden table in front of the stand, are placed five traps, with an interval of space between each, and every trap contains a pigeon charged to the shooter at two shillings and two-pence a bird, or twenty-six shillings the dozen. To the right of the scorer, and immediately behind his seat, is a hamper containing live birds; and another, and larger, square, white wicker basket for the reception of the slaughtered doves. The second of the two receptacles has been erroneously called the agony basket, on account of a superstition current among the prejudiced opponents of pigeon shoot-

ing to the effect that within the basket countless pigeons writhe in the agonies of death. As a matter of fact the lad who takes care of the retrievers which bring the wounded quarry from the field of slaughter, dexterously breaks the necks of the pigeons, and so kills them outright before consigning them to the basket.

The shooters are handicapped; the distances ranging from the before-mentioned thirty-three yards to twenty-three and a half yards. From time to time many and costly prizes are given for home and international matches. During a late contest the handsomest prize, a silver cup, valued at one hundred guineas, was won by a Belgian. The shooter takes his place in front of the traps, when the puller almost immediately calls out: "Are you ready?" Whereupon the shooter cries: "Pull"; the trap is opened, the pigeon flies out, and, supposing the shot to be a good one, falls palpitating and struggling upon the grass. The retriever then bounds forward, secures the bird, and brings it to the basket. Sometimes the birds escape altogether; on other occasions, although wounded, they manage to fly over the palings, where, if they are not killed by fellows outside, they take their chance of liberty and recovery.

Much has been written of the slaughtered and wounded doves falling into the laps of the ladies who sit and look on at the sport, and the most has been made of the horrors of pigeon's blood. As a matter of fact the ladies sit in rear of the shooters, and the wounded birds almost invariably fly forward. Ladies, it is true, do watch the sport, and with apparent interest. I do not, however, presume to discuss the propriety of the proceeding. No lady, unless she be in "general society," is admitted to the Hurlingham Club; and what "general society" approves it is not, I suppose, for the courteous scribe to condemn.

The statement that the poor pigeons are shot standing is not altogether accurate. Rule fifteen distinctly lays down that a bird shot on the ground with the first barrel is "no bird"; but it may be shot on the ground with the second barrel if it has been fired at with the first barrel while on the wing; but if the shooter misses with the first and discharges his second barrel, it is to be accounted a lost bird in case of not falling within the bounds. Personally I am not in the confidence of the pigeon species; but I should

fancy they would consider that a pretty fair arrangement.

Room for the polo players, the blue jersey and butcher-boot-clad knights, mounted on amiable English ponies under fourteen hands, and of the average value of eighty guineas each. Russian ponies are not fitted for work of this sort. They are too hard in the mouth.

The polo field at Hurlingham, formerly an orchard, is now level as a billiard-table. In shape it is an oblong square; and at each end of its length are the goals, eighty yards wide, and two hundred and fifty yards apart. Along the outer length nearest the shooting enclosure is the promenade, a charming lawn furnished with umbrella tents and many chairs, where youth and beauty and old age and beauty, "robed in white samite, mystic, wonderful," disports, flirts, bows, and generally repeats the Horticultural on a fête day as per the heaven of the upper circles. Opposite the lawn is the pavilion and dressing-rooms sacred to players; and in the rear of the pavilion, shaded by umbrageous oaks and elms, stand the pony sheds where the little steeds rest, and are saddled and swaddled for the encounter.

Polo is a game of Indian origin, and is somewhat similar to Chougham, an ancient Eastern sport, which may have been played in the deserts of Arabia when the ancestors of the members of the Hurlingham Club went about painted blue. The modern polo-stick is four feet—more or less—in length, and is made of bamboo, leather bound at the handle, with a beech-wood striker at the other end. The balls, three inches in diameter, and painted white, are turned from elder wood. In India, I am told, polo-balls are turned from the root of the palm, and are lighter than ours.

In 1872, in which year polo was first introduced into England, it attracted but little attention. Nor was it scientifically played until two years afterwards, when the present ground was laid out at Hurlingham under the auspices of the Marquis of Queensberry, Lord Castlereagh, Lord Cole, and other noblemen and gentlemen.

Polo ponies have their fore-legs bandaged, and the players wear leg-pads to avoid accidents, which, in consequence of the excellence of the rules and the care taken by the players, do not often happen. No spurs are allowed. None but regulation-sticks and balls are permitted to be used. In the event of a stick being dropped the player must dismount to pick

it up. A player may interpose his pony before his antagonist, so as to prevent the latter reaching the ball, whether in full career or otherwise, and despite the immediate neighbourhood of the ball; and therein lies the chief danger of a thoroughly manly and healthy game.

Imagine then, if you can, the sides chosen, the dashing fellows mounted and in order, the ball thrown into the playground, and the game begun. The object of one side is to hit the ball through their opponents' goal, that of the other to defend the goal.

To play at polo well a man must be a finished horseman, daring, ready, and self-possessed, and the game is a splendid image of knightly chivalry.

It is a glorious sight when every pony's head is turned inwards in a scrimmage. Presently the clump divides, and the ball spins along the turf. Quick as lightning the rushing ponies follow the white speck across the green carpet till an uplifted stick swoops down and strikes. So the players follow; now hither, now thither, turning in mid career; now right, now left, following the swiftly rolling ball; this side and that, in and out; now up in a corner, anon in the centre of the field, then goalward once again, till some stalwart player with a mighty sweep sends the ball bounding along the turf, as it seems, to the very end of the field. But the opposing company charge amain at racing speed, wild with the joy of the bloodless battle, swifter than the ball they go, and with a mighty effort overtake the white messenger on the very threshold of the goal, and strike it once more within bounds.

Cambric, and frills, and perfumes of Bond Street the best abound at Hurlingham. Light laughter echoes, solemn politeness prevails, and fragile fashion holds high revel. But there likewise are muscle, and pluck, and that high spirit of manly emulation which, let us hope, shall keep our grey weather worthy to be the breathing air of a free people.

STRANGE DEALINGS WITH THE CROWN JEWELS.

THEORETICALLY, a nation unprovided with a standing army is bound to keep the peace except under irresistible provocation. It is none the less true, that the fact that they had no regular soldiery ready to their beck and call, never deterred English kings from indulging their bellicose propensities. So

long as they could raise money, men were never lacking; and cash they usually contrived to find by hook or crook, even if the Commons, the clergy, and the Jews failed to supply sufficient for the needs of the hour.

The Plantagenets were very rough and ready financiers. When Richard the First took it into his head to try conclusions with Saladin, he raised the needful by turning the crown manors, and the fortresses of Roxburgh and Berwick into hard cash, selling offices of trust to the best bidders, and did not hesitate to avow that he would dispose of London itself if a purchaser were forthcoming. Strangely enough, *Cœur de Lion* never seems to have thought of doing the same by his crown jewels. Henry the Third was the first English monarch who had recourse to that undignified expedient. The idea, indeed, did not originate with him; for it is recorded that when some person or persons unknown suggested the replenishing the royal coffers by selling the crown plate and jewelry, the king hinted a doubt as to the likelihood of finding purchasers, and being assured that the citizens of London would gladly accommodate him, Henry exclaimed: "On my word, if the treasury of Augustus were brought to sale, the citizens are able to be the purchasers. These clowns, who assume to themselves the name of barons, abound in everything, while we are reduced to necessities!" Notwithstanding his indignation, Henry, like other men in his predicament, was willing enough to deal with the full-pursed ones he abused, and so, in 1248, he sold the citizens of London all the plate and jewelry he had not already mortgaged to the merchants of France. The relief afforded was, however, only a temporary one; for seven years later we find him demanding eight thousand marks of the Jews, and answering their remonstrance against the exaction, by pleading that he was a beggar, spoiled and stripped of all his revenues, without a farthing wherewith to keep himself, and therefore must have money from any hand and by any means.

A more capable man in every way than impecunious Henry, Edward the First recovered the crown jewels his sire had pawned, and by liberal purchasing became in time the owner of a splendid collection of diamonds, rubies, emeralds, sapphires, amethysts, topazes, carbuncles, chalcidones and garnets; to say nothing of gemmed crucifixes, silver girdles, gold rings and clasps, gilt combs, silver-sheathed knives, and pearl-covered ewers; treasures depo-

sited in Westminster Abbey with his four crowns. There the king left them when he departed for Scotland, in 1303, to avenge De Segrave's triple defeat, and there he expected to find them on his return; but during his absence the treasure-chamber was ransacked by thieves, who carried off a hundred thousand pounds' worth of valuables. Only one was caught, with a fiftieth part of the plunder upon him, although he confessed to having "conveyed" sundry rings, girdles, gold and silver spoons, cups, saucers and dishes, three pouches full of precious stones, and a silver-gilt Virgin. The rogues left Henry the Third's secret seal and the consecration ring upon the chamber floor, and did not venture to appropriate any one of Edward's quartette of crowns, tempting prizes though they were; one being set with Indian pearls, one mounted with emeralds and rubies, a third with emeralds, rubies, and pearls; while the gold coronation crown was richly garnished with emeralds, sapphires, rubies, and large Eastern pearls.

Some of the plunder found its way to Colchester, some to Northampton, and some was disposed of nearer the scene of the robbery. Edward strongly suspected the Lombard merchants of being concerned in the affair, but no proof was forthcoming against principals or accessories. For all that, the abbot of Westminster, the Abbey sacristan, and forty-eight monks were sent to the tower upon suspicion, and were not all released until two years afterwards. Whether they were innocent or guilty it is impossible to say; but if it be true that the Abbey grave-yard was sown with hemp four months before the burglary, that a hiding-place might be ready to hand for the stolen property, the dwellers in the Abbey precincts must have been more or less implicated in the matter.

Invited over to the low countries by the famous brewer of Ghent, James d'Arteville, Edward the Third supplemented the grant obtained from parliament towards the expenses of the expedition, by squeezing the Lombards, and pawning his crown and his jewels to the Flemings. In their hands they remained until redeemed by his grandson, or his grandson's guardians. Most probably by the latter. Prodigal Richard was apter at incurring new debts than at paying off old scores; and had not been long his own master before the crown and its companion jewels found their way into the possession of the Earl of Arundel and

the Bishop of London, as security for the repayment of ten thousand pounds advanced to their improvident sovereign, who parted company with his beloved jewelled white harts in a similar emergency. To redeem the blemished crown from pawn devolved upon proud Bolingbroke, who, having enough to do to hold his own at home, was not to be tempted to embark in costly foreign expeditions, and was enabled to keep the golden ring and its sister treasures to their proper use.

Not so fortunate proved his warlike successor. To raise the funds to carry him to France, and show the jesting Dauphin he had mistaken his man, Harry the Fifth was fain to borrow ten thousand marks of the mayor and commonalty of London, and a lesser sum of the Bishop of Worcester and the City of Coventry; the bishop and his fellow loan-mongers receiving the king's "Skelton Collar," garnished with sapphires, rubies, and pearls, by way of security; while the Londoners obtained his "Rich Collar," worth two thousand eight hundred pounds. This Henry contrived to redeem before twelve months had gone by, but the Skelton Collar remained in the hands of the hero's creditors to the day of his death.

Henry the Sixth was always sorrowing and borrowing, the latter at a very burdensome rate; for when, in 1439, he wanted a loan of seven thousand marks of the imperious churchman, Cardinal Beaufort, his kind uncle, not satisfied with the deposit of the Rich Collar, obtained the Skyngton Collar also, besides three gold tablets of St. George, Our Lady, and Christ's Passion; a great alms dish made in manner of a ship full of men of arms fighting upon the shipside; divers chargers, chalices, basins, pots, and saucers; and, last but not least, the Sword of Spain, a golden weapon decked with sapphires—all, moreover, to become the absolute property of the covetous cardinal unless redeemed within a year. That the king ever enjoyed his own again does not appear probable, seeing that a few years afterwards he could pay the Earl of Buckingham and his men for their services in France only by transferring a tablet, a little bell, and two basins of gold to that nobleman's keeping; things of little account in the estimation of a monarch who, if Shakespeare pictures him truly, would gladly have exchanged places with the homely swain, and spent his hours sitting on a hill "to carve out dials quaintly, point by point."

Doughty soldiers as they were, both the handsomest king of his time and his brother, high-shouldered Richard, were too fond of setting off their persons to the best advantage to readily part with anything conducing to that end. The Tudors were more given to increasing than diminishing the contents of the royal jewel-house, so there was no more trafficking with crown jewels for many a long day; not, at least, by their proper owners. Others were, apparently, not so scrupulous, for when King James set about cataloguing and collecting the valuables he inherited with the crown, he found it very difficult to get some of them out of the hands of certain lords and ladies of high degree, to whose charge they had been committed by Queen Bess: the Earl of Suffolk meeting a demand for the restoration of jewelry and plate rated to be worth two hundred and fifty thousand pounds, by putting in a plea of condonation on the part of his dead mistress.

It mattered little, however, to anyone save the disappointed monarch, who looked to supply his extravagant needs by scattering the treasures acquired by his more careful predecessors. Wanting money for his "progress" in the land from which he came, James borrowed sixty thousand pounds upon a portion of the crown jewels, after vainly trying to persuade the aldermen of London to lend a hundred thousand pounds on the same security. Before another two years had gone by, his Majesty was treating with Master Peter Van Lore for a loan of twenty thousand pounds upon his consort's jewels, to enable him to make a progress Windsor way; but that worthy would not advance more than eighteen thousand pounds, and with that sum the king was obliged to be content. Chamberlain was disgusted at being compelled to let the valuables go, but found a little consolation in the fact that the choicest jewels yet remained untouched, notably, a carquois of broad and long pearls, the fairest in all Christendom, reckoned to be worth forty thousand pounds.

It might just as well have gone with the rest, it was bound to go sooner or later. To Charles the First the crown jewels were merely so many merchantable and mortgagable articles, and he had not reigned twelve months ere he began treating them as such. The royal exchequer was low. Buckingham was off to the Hague, and his master thought it a good opportunity to raise a round sum, and determined if necessary to empty his jewel-house.

Lord Broke protested against delivering up the jewels in his charge without proper warrant; the master of the jewel-house exhorted the king not to pledge the regal treasures without the concurrence of his council; but Broke and Mildmay might have spared their breath. Charles was never very amenable to argument if it ran counter to his desires, and not at all so when in want of money. Mildmay's advice was thrown away, and such a clearance was effected at the jewel-house, that the master was compelled to inform the king, upon his asking for more jewels, that he had already sent everything of any value, and if he wanted anything more he must be content to take silver plate, as there was nothing else left.

Charles was not long in discovering that he would have done better to have listened to Mildmay. He had hoped to obtain three hundred thousand pounds from the Hollanders; one of Buckingham's agents, Philip Calandrine, was lucky enough to raise fifty-eight thousand upon his majesty's "jewel of the three brethren" and sundry pearls; but Sackville Crow had to bring the greater part of the plate and jewels back again to England, the mynheers daring to doubt whether the king had the right to pawn his jewels without the consent and approval of parliament, and those among them who were willing to waive that objection, refused to part with their money, unless the redemption of the jewels within three years was guaranteed by some merchants of good repute and standing.

Some merchants of repute at home were bold enough to take all risks. James Maxwell lent Charles about eleven thousand pounds upon two large diamonds, afterwards buying them outright at the cost of another eleven hundred pounds. Purchasers too were forthcoming for a girdle of rubies in the form of red and white roses; a large agate, engraved with portraits of Henry the Fifth and Edward the Sixth; two great half-round pearls belonging to the Mirror of Britain—"a rich jewel of gold" which, when it came into the possession of James the First, bore "one very fair table diamond; one very fair table ruby; two other large diamonds, cut lozenge-wise, garnished with small diamonds; two round pearls, and one fair diamond cut in facets." Nor were buyers wanting for four gold collars, one of them composed of twenty-four knots of gold and twenty-four double scallop-shells, with Saint Michael

"hanging to it by a couple of little chains;" for a double-cross of gold set with diamonds and rubies; for twelve pieces of goldsmith's work, like friars' knots, with ninety-one pendant pearls; or for a golden circlet, "new made for our dear mother Queen Anne," with its eight fair diamonds, eight fair sapphires, eight fair rubies, and eight fair emeralds, garnished with sixty-four pearls, thirty-two small rubies, and thirty-two small diamonds, with borders of diamonds and rubies.

Time justified the Dutch loan-mongers' suspiciousness regarding the likelihood of King Charles redeeming his pawned property at the proper time. In 1628 the royal borrower was nearly at his wit's end to satisfy the demands of those who had trusted to his promise, and who threatened to proceed to execution if there was any further delay in redeeming the valuables they held. To save himself from being so dishonoured, Charles sold the States-General four thousand tons of iron ordnance, and with the hundred and twenty thousand pounds thus obtained, recovered a collar and its belongings from the King of Denmark, and the major part of the jewelry and plate pledged in Holland. The last-mentioned was at once melted down and sold to supply the wherewithal to still the clamours of other creditors. More jewels were redeemed in 1631 and in 1635, when the king was not a little chagrined to find he had to pay five thousand pounds more than he had bargained for, owing to his agents having secured their own remuneration by obtaining just that much more upon the jewels than they had paid over to him.

When, in 1642, it became evident that the quarrel between the king and the Commons could only be settled in one way, while the women of London were bringing their bodkins and thimbles to help the cause, Queen Henrietta was busy in Holland selling the king's great collar of rubies and other like jewels, and buying arms and ammunition with the proceeds; not a whit deterred by hearing that parliament had solemnly declared that the king had no power to sell or pawn the crown jewels, and pronounced whomsoever should pay, lend, send, or bring any money into the kingdom for or upon the said jewels, to be an enemy of the state, and liable to be dealt with accordingly. In passing this order of the day, parliament conveniently ignored the historical fact that in his dealings with the crown jewels, Charles acted strictly in ac-

cordance with precedent; every monarch before him looking upon the crown jewels as his personal property, to be retained, lent, or sold as he might think fit.

While denying the king's right to do as he liked with his own, or what he believed to be his own, the Commons did not scruple about doing as they listed with such of the crown jewels as Charles had left within reach. Assuming, somewhat prematurely, that the regalia would never more be required, Henry Martyn received leave and license to sell the contents of the royal jewel-chests at Westminster. The commission was executed with more energy than discretion, as though the only object had been to get rid of the obnoxious reminders of royalty. Nathaniel Hearne secured Queen Elizabeth's great and precious onyx-stone; one Frances Carson was made rich with a hatful of crown treasures, and a Jesuit of her acquaintance contrived to walk off with forty thousand pounds' worth of jewels. The sceptres were one and all broken up, proving, much to the disgust of their appropriators, to be merely silver-gilt instead of honest gold; while one staff proved to be gilded iron, and another gilded wood. Even Queen Edith's crown, reputed to be made of massive gold, was found upon trial to be but silver-gilt, enriched with foul pearls, garnets, sapphires, and odd stones of little value, unworthy of its more genuine companions: King Alfred's crown, of gilt wire, set with slight stones and two little bells; the queen's crown; Edward the Sixth's crown; and the imperial crown of gold, known as King Edward's crown, from its first wearer, Edward the Third.

One of the old historical crowns escaped confiscation and destruction: the ancient crown of Scotland, supposed to have been first worn by Robert Bruce, which was kept, with the Scottish regalia, in Edinburgh until 1651; when, fearing it might fall into Cromwell's hands, its custodians placed crown and regalia under the protection of the Earl Marischal, in the Castle of Dunnottar. This stronghold was soon invested by Lambert's army; and upon its fall becoming imminent, the wife of the minister of Kinneff, the Rev. James Granger, determined to save the ancient insignia of royalty. Obtaining permission from the Parliamentary general to pass through his lines to pay a visit to the lady of the castle, Mrs. Granger carried away the crown herself, her maid following after with the sceptre and the sword of state hidden in

two bundles of lint. Arriving safely at Kinneff, she gave crown, sceptre, and sword into her husband's keeping; and he, when night came on, hid them beneath the church pavement, and there they remained until the Restoration, when they were unearthed and given up to the Merry Monarch, who rewarded Mrs. Grauger for her loyal service by a grant of two thousand marks; a happy ending to the last recorded instance of strange dealings with the crown jewels.

BY THE OLD FOUNTAIN.

A STORY IN TWO PARTS. PART II.

A FEW happy days flew past during which Lord Arlington indulged himself in the pleasure of analysing the simple trustfulness of the mind of his promised bride. He allowed her to make plans for their life of retirement and industry.

"I shall only have one plain dress," she said, "and sometimes a rose to make me look pretty. I shall not need any money—scarcely any at all."

"But if we should not have any dinner?" he said.

"I never cared about dinner," said Lalage, "I would rather have a cup of tea."

So it went on, till one evening, while they lingered beside the fountain, he suddenly drew forth a magnificent bracelet of diamonds, and clasped it on her arm.

She stared at it in amazement. "But where did you get it?" she asked.

"It is bought and paid for," he answered, smiling.

"Oh, this will never do; this is terrible!" said Lalage. "Why, sir, it would furnish our house!"

"So it would," he said.

"I did not think you had so much money in the world as this would cost," said Lalage; "but I will put it away, and we can sell it when we want something."

"So we can," said Lord Arlington.

But the next day he brought her a necklace to match the bracelet, and this time she was vexed.

"It must be wrong," she said; "I am sorry you have done it. You know we have no right to such things as these."

"Ah, but we have the right," said her lover. "My darling, these jewels belonged to my mother, and I have only had them re-set."

"Your mother!" said Lalage. "And yet you told me that you were——"

"Lowly born," said Lord Arlington.

"Ah, I cannot understand you."

"I will tease you no longer. Lalage, forgive me for having played you a trick."

"A trick!"

The colour mounted to her brow.

"I am no poor artist, uncertain of gaining a livelihood. I am an English nobleman, and my name is Lord Arlington of Derwent."

Lalage had turned pale, and her eyes had opened very wide.

"My darling shall be a countess," said Lord Arlington.

"You are telling me the truth this time?" said the girl earnestly.

"On my word of honour," said his lordship.

Lalage sighed. "Let me think about it," she said.

"I believe you are disappointed," said Lord Arlington delightedly, "but you will soon get over that, my pretty one."

Mrs. L'Estrange found her niece that night lost in a reverie at her window.

"My dear," she said, "this change does not seem to please you as much as it ought."

"I am glad for his sake, of course," said the girl; "I shall be proud to see him hold his head high. But I am sorry for my own part. There will be nothing for me to do. Anybody could wear diamonds; anybody could walk gracefully through life by his side; but I should have been so good to him had he really been poor. Now I shall have no way of showing my love."

"This is a romantic feeling which will quickly pass away," said the old lady. "Brighten up, my Lalage, and be thankful for the fate that has sought you out."

"I wish," she added mentally, "I wish I could only feel sure that nothing would ever occur to cloud that happy fate."

The reflection was commonplace enough, but it had a more than ordinary meaning.

Lalage's feeling of disappointment did fade away before the happy realities of the life that had opened upon her. If she had not the privilege of making any sacrifice for her love, she had the enjoyment of seeing him already occupying a distinguished position in the world, and she was woman enough to take pleasure in all the beautiful gifts he lavished on her, and to listen with delight to the tales he told her of the wonders and charms of the great world of which she knew nothing as yet, but which would receive her with adoration and homage by-and-by. Then how delicious to hear of how they would

travel together into sunnier lands, explore all the most exquisite corners of creation, sketch together, climb the great mountains, float on the storied rivers. Life would be one long summer's day to them, said Lord Arlington; and Lalage never doubted.

A time was fixed for the wedding, and as the preparations went on Lalage became painfully aware that her aunt was in a troubled state of mind. Her invalid uncle was in better health than usual, and he had given his consent to the marriage, and there was no reason for the disturbance of Mrs. L'Estrange's mind save only her sorrow at parting from her child. And Lalage grieved that the trouble should go so deep. With the bright hopefulness of youth she could hardly perceive that they were going to be separated at all. After their return from that enchanting trip, she and her husband were to pass much time with the old couple, and plans were made which would keep them almost always near. And in their absence, thought Lalage, would not her dear old aunt make herself quite as comfortable, and read her favourite magazines and newspapers with as much interest as if her niece were in the garden alone, as she had used to be so many hours of the day, or wandering about the green alleys, growing romantic from the teaching of the nightingales?

"It is only an idea," thought the happy girl; "she will not miss me as much as she thinks."

But the trouble in Mrs. L'Estrange's mind was from another cause than that which her niece had guessed. It came from a deep-lying fear long dormant in her mind, but always more or less felt, and influencing her actions with regard to her niece—a fear which of late had become vividly awake and alive.

The question of whether it could be lulled to rest again, and return to its dormant condition, or whether it might issue from her mind in definite shape to affect the destinies of others, was unconsciously decided for her one evening when Lord Arlington had just arrived from a hasty visit to town, and Lalage had shyly appeared, to gratify his special whim, in a dress of the richest velvet and lace, and wearing all his diamonds upon her breast, and arms, and head.

"Countess Lalage!" said her aunt, kissing her and holding her off; and the old lady thought his lordship more abstracted and less enthusiastic than he ought to have been at the sight of so enchanting an apparition.

"Have you heard any bad news?" asked Lalage, laying her hand on his arm. "You seem unusually overcast."

"Yes, love," he said; "I have been witnessing trouble. A poor fellow, a particular friend of mine, is separating from his wife. It is a quarrel arising from a deception that was practised upon him by her. There is some family secret which she withheld from him. It has come to his knowledge without her assistance, and he cannot forgive her."

"Is not that rather harsh?" said Mrs. L'Estrange, turning pale, and withdrawing into the shadow of a curtain.

"I cannot say I think so," said his lordship, a little stiffly. "Everything concerning his wife ought to be confided to a man before his marriage with her. In this case it was particularly important. Her parentage was in question. She was not so well born as he supposed."

"I think he is a cruel man," said Mrs. L'Estrange, "however wrong she may have been."

"That is according to one's notions," said Lord Arlington.

Lalage had been silent, looking with a little awe into the face of her future husband. "I have no secret, thank Heaven!" she murmured with a sigh.

"Aunt," she said later, "how thankful I am that I am what is called well born."

The old lady gave a little gasp that was almost a cry, and seized her hand.

"Come in here with me, my dear; I want to speak to you."

"Are you not well?" asked the girl anxiously, following her.

"Not quite; a little oppressed. Sit down, and let me speak to you."

Lalage cast a rapid backward glance over her own conduct.

"Have I done anything wrong?" she asked.

"Wrong? You, my precious child? You never did anything wrong."

"Oh, auntie, what an immoral conclusion! What would the catechism say if it heard you?"

"My dear, I cannot jest. Listen to me while I have courage. I have something important to tell you."

"Yes, auntie, I am listening. Don't be so distressed. What can it be that can matter so much. You are well—uncle is well—I am well; and somebody else is the dearest, and greatest, and best in the world."

"My child!"

"I don't believe there's anything in the world that could be wrong."

But the girl's cheek paled a little as she saw how deep was the distress, how real the struggle that had seized on the mind of her aunt.

"Come, auntie; speak, speak!"

Mrs. L'Estrange raised her head and looked at her earnestly.

"Lalage, you are wise and brave. Can I trust you with a secret?"

"A secret? I hate secrets. Oh, auntie, must you lay it on me? Nay, that was a selfish speech. Whatever you suffer from I would share."

"My tender child! But if it were only a question of my own suffering I should not have resolved to speak to you. The matter concerns yourself—will concern all your after life. The life you must go on with when I am in my grave."

"And must I hear it?"

"I have made up my mind that it is important you should. I would guard you against misfortune; teach you how to avoid the wreck of your happiness."

Lalage could ask no more, but sat gazing at the elder lady with beseeching eyes.

"Tell me," she said at last.

"Lalage, you heard Lord Arlington describe the situation of his friend who is separating from his wife. The position of that wife may be your own possibly in the future, unless you follow the counsel I shall give you."

"What do you mean?"

"You are less well born than he thinks you. Ah, my child, do not stare so wildly! You are not my niece, nor any relation to me or to my husband. We have treated you as our child, we have called you our niece; and unless wicked and troublesome people should spring up to try to destroy you, no one need ever know that you are not what the world has believed you to be."

"Go on, auntie."

"This is why I have shrunk from introducing you to society—from the thought of your being sought in marriage by someone like Lord Arlington. But fate brought the thing I feared into your life and mine, before I had had time to decide on what I ought to do. Since your engagement I have tried to lay my fears to rest, to hope that once you were married to a man who loves you so dearly all dread of misfortune would be over. But Lord Arlington's conversation of this evening has driven me out of my wits with fear for your

future. Should he ever discover that you are the child of low, of wicked parents, he may turn, like his friend, and make you miserable for ever. You may do much to avoid this, and should claims be made upon you you must know how to meet them and ward off the danger. This is why I have told you, even at the risk of over-clouding your young mind with anxiety and care. Heaven knows what a terrible effort I have made for your sake; but I know how your heart is bound up in this man, and I fear to see the marriage broken off."

Lalage, as pale as a ghost, rose from her knees, and walked up and down the room holding her hand to her head.

"Let me think," she said; "let me think. I feel a little stunned, but I know there is a way out of this."

"What way, Lalage; what way?"

"Why, auntie, to tell him on the instant, of course. It was the secret that disgusted him—how can you have forgotten that? It was the disloyalty, the want of confidence, the cold, silent distrust. If I were a man I should feel it as he did."

"Lalage," said her aunt, "you cannot dare to tell him. Lord Arlington loves you, but he is a man of the world. He is proud of his birth, proud of the unbroken nobility of his line. It is a part of your perfection in his eyes that you belong to a family whose antiquity and prestige cannot be questioned."

"Nay," said Lalage with a pale smile, "you do not think he would cast me off? Take away his love from me because of a misfortune for which I am not accountable?"

"I do not know; but I fear. There is that in his face, in his character, in his manner this evening, that makes me dread to let him know what I have told you."

"But remember," said Lalage, "remember his delight because I accepted his love, believing him to be under a cloud. Ah, he will only be glad to have an opportunity of acting as I did."

"My love, I wish I could think with you."

"Besides, what difference does it make? I am your own real child. I have been so all my life. Who is going to rise up and claim me?"

Mrs. L'Estrange shuddered.

"Sit down here, Lalage, for I must complete what I have begun. I will tell you the story of your parentage and birth."

They sat far into the night, while Lalage listened to a sad narrative which need not

be narrated here. She wept bitterly and trembled while her aunt reiterated that Lord Arlington must never hear the tale. In all probability, said Mrs. L'Estrange, no one would ever discover the shadow of her secret; no one would ever claim her, and her husband would never suspect that there was anything to hide. There was only a chance; and by vigilance and presence of mind Lalage must be prepared to deal with an emergency should it arise.

"And live a lie!" said Lalage, lifting a wan face out of her aunt's lap in the dawn light that crept towards them through the window.

"Do not use such dreadful words, darling," said the afflicted old lady. "Live in peace, innocent as you are."

"I could no longer be innocent," said Lalage, "were I to look in Lord Arlington's face and keep the knowledge of this from him."

Mrs. L'Estrange rocked herself in her chair.

"Oh, what have I done?" she moaned. "Oh, what have I done?"

"You have done right, auntie; but do not let us now begin to do horribly wrong!"

"You shall not tell him," said her aunt, holding her hands.

"Auntie, do you remember how you reproached me with concealment when I withheld from you for a few hours, through mere shyness and diffidence, the fact of my having met with Lord Arlington in the garden? If you were shocked then, think, think what he would afterwards feel! I could not do it. Why should you wish me to do it? Auntie, is your nature so changed that you have suddenly come to think so little of a falsehood?"

"Oh, forgive me!" she continued, as the poor old lady bent her head. "I know you will think differently by-and-by. Besides," she added cheerfully, "I know there is nothing to be so miserable about. I feel that I am loved, and that this wretched story will make no lasting difference. Cast me off? He could not cast me off. He loves me a great deal too dearly." She sprang to her feet and laughed. "Yes," she said; "all this is nothing but a nightmare. I am bound to him in spite of it, for he loves me for myself."

With smiles and loving speeches she coaxed the weary old woman to rest, and then went away to her own room, where she walked up and down in the sunrise, thinking the matter over, and trying to

see in it only an opportunity for proving the fealty of her lover. She thought over all the exalted sentiments she had heard him express; the approbation he always bestowed on any noble conduct; the thousand words and acts of tenderness he had lavished on herself; the many times he had told her she was the only woman in the world he could make his wife. Was it to be supposed that all could be forgotten because a misfortune had fallen upon her? Were such to be the case he was no longer the person she had believed him to be.

It was only the concealment that disgusted and offended him in the case of his friend's wife. He had been right in saying that every circumstance relating to his future wife should be laid before a man previous to his marriage with her. When hearing him speak so, she had little idea that there was any secret yet to be unfolded concerning herself. But, since this secret existed, she would certainly make it known to him without delay.

Lord Arlington had arranged to spend the day with the friend whose trouble had affected him so much, and was not to return to Lalage's presence until dinner-time; and in the meantime she set herself to prepare to meet him with her unhappy tale, to get the burthen off her mind before she allowed him to enter the castle again.

Mrs. L'Estrange was too ill all that day to rise from her bed, and her husband sat by her side trying to console her.

"The child is right," he said, "and we must not interfere with her. But courage, my dear; no one could resist our Lalage."

Meantime the girl was dressing herself to go forth and encounter the dismay of her lover. She put on a plain white gown, hardly whiter than her face, and a thought went through her mind concerning this attire: "It is worn both for mourning and joy, and so it will do for either fortune."

She had never let her heart sink altogether, but it beat heavily as she went slowly along the flowery paths and across the grassy lawns, feeling that she was at least going to bring cruel disappointment to one who had been so good to her.

She was before her time, and as she waited, wandering among the beds of roses, she plucked two, a red and a white, and said to herself:

"I will offer them to him for choice before I speak. The red shall be for hope, the white for fear. If he takes the red I shall feel my heart begin to get warm. If the white——"

She saw his figure advancing out of the distance towards her. He quickened his steps to meet her, and when he came near enough she stretched out her hand offering him the roses.

"Only one," she said playfully. "Which will you have?"

"The one most like yourself," he answered, smiling, and drawing the white one from between her fingers. "Ah, it is too like at present," he added hastily, as he saw a deadly pallor overspread her countenance.

She turned away her head a moment, and then recovering herself looked him wistfully in the face.

"Lord Arlington, I want to speak to you. I have something to tell you."

He smiled again, thinking it so impossible (as she had done) that anything could be seriously wrong.

"Have the diamonds been stolen?" he asked; "or has anything happened to your favourite dress?"

"Do not jest," she said imploringly, and looked at him again with a long pleading look.

"Tell me at once what is the matter," said Lord Arlington, taking both her little cold hands in his own.

"My lord, I want to ask you a question. Did your friend—the friend you spoke of yesterday—love his wife before he married her?"

"Certainly he loved her. And so it is this unlucky story that is troubling your sensitive mind, my sweetheart?"

"Had she told him her secret before they were married, what do you suppose he would have done?"

"I do not know; I cannot say," he answered lightly. "Why plague your little head with such questions?"

"Lord Arlington, last evening I looked you in the face, and said happily and most truly, 'I have no secret.' I could not say so this evening."

"Oh, Lalage! you with a secret! How can you ask me to believe such nonsense?"

"You must listen to me, you must understand me," cried the girl, in a tone of anguish; "I am terribly, terribly in earnest."

Lord Arlington was startled into seriousness. "Speak, then," he said gravely.

Lalage wrung her hands together, and looked on the ground while she spoke.

"I have learned, only last night, that you have been deceived with regard to me. I am not the person you have supposed me to be. I am not Miss L'Estrange. I have

no claim of relationship upon the dear ones whom I have known as my uncle and aunt. My parentage is obscure, and a shadow on my birth. I cannot tell you all the details. My aunt will relate them to you."

Lord Arlington passed his hand over his eyes as if to remove some film that clouded his vision, and then he looked again at the trembling figure before him.

"Lalage," he said in an altered voice, "I am sure you are ill. Do not be obstinate, but come back to the castle, to your aunt."

"My aunt?" said Lalage. "Have I not told you? Ah, it is she who is ill. Lord Arlington, I have come here to give you back your freedom—if you will."

"Good Heavens! do you know what you are saying?"

"I know it only too well. My fate, our fate, is in your hands."

"Lalage, do you know what you appear to me now? A frightened girl, raving in delirium. Let me hear this incredible story authentically from other lips. Not till then can I treat it as worthy of consideration."

"Colonel L'Estrange will see you," said Lalage. "Go to him."

"At once," said Lord Arlington, and a bitter gleam came into his eyes, seeming to belie his asseverations of unbelief. The young girl cast one timid glance at his face, but he was gazing over her head at something beyond her. Not one word of assurance, of comfort, of tenderness, did he bestow on her before he turned away with darkened brow and whitened lip. And Lalage was left alone, pacing up and down the grass, waiting for she knew not what, praying wildly for his return.

"He will come back," she said to herself, "to find me here, and tell me that it makes no difference. It is natural he should be shocked, feeling that he has been deceived; but how could he cast me off? Why, he loves me! He has told me so again and again. I am still the same creature. I love him even more because I have been obliged to give him this unkind stab of pain. He could not do without me—not if he tried. He will soon return, looking for me to tell me so. Oh, come back, come back, or——"

The daylight had crept away, and the moonlight suddenly awoke and silvered Lalage's white dress. Seeing it she started and felt ashamed of her patience and her lingering, finding herself belated in the park. She fled among the trees like a white bird with a wounded wing, and reaching the castle, hurried to cross the library on her way to her own chamber.

With her hand on a curtain she was stayed in the act of lifting it. Troubled voices were raised in discussion within the library.

"I have owned the wrong we did, Lord Arlington," the colonel was saying, "owned it sorrowfully, and repented it bitterly. We were placed in a difficult position, and we feared to destroy the happiness of our child. She is so unknown, the chance of its ever coming to light so small, that we should have been safe in keeping silence to the end. We have been wrong, but not so wrong as we might have been; and we are severely punished in as much as the penalty of our fault must be heavily paid by her."

"And am I not punished for what I have not deserved?" said Lord Arlington in a voice of anger. "I came here in good faith and trusted you all, and in return my hopes are broken and my life is spoiled. She—she is young, beautiful, enchanting—she will learn to forget me and be happy."

"I hope she will, Lord Arlington; I trust she will," said the old colonel with deep feeling. "We will speak of her no more. Go now, and do likewise yourself. You are a man of the world, and with so much self-denial you must be a philosopher. Do not anger yourself longer."

"Sir!" cried Lord Arlington, "you are strangely heartless. I can never forgive you for what you have made me suffer."

And then followed the opening and shutting of the door.

Lalage looked into the library, and saw the old man sitting with bowed head, mourning for her sorrow. She crept to his side and laid his head on her breast.

"Do not grieve," she whispered; "let him go in his pride. We will learn to be happy without him."

"I pray Heaven we may," said the old man; "I pray Heaven we may, my good, brave little girl."

Nevertheless, a faint hope still lingered unacknowledged in Lalage's mind, and for several days she wandered restlessly about from room to room, and from garden to garden, expecting every moment to see her lover return. He did not come, and after a week had passed Lalage fell ill; and when she was sufficiently recovered to be able to move, the old lady and gentleman forgot their infirmities and their love of home, and took her abroad with them to travel.

Out in the foreign world the girl cast off her sad looks, and threw herself with ardour into every intellectual enjoyment

that was open to her. She was never tired of exploring the treasures of art, of feasting her eyes on the accumulations of beauty which the centuries had heaped up for the delight of her young eyes. An insatiable love for all that was old, curious, and beautiful carried her all over Europe. She painted, modelled, studied, and seemed so happy that the old people congratulated each other, and said that the wound had not gone deep.

"But she cannot always live like this," they said. "She must see a little of the gaieties of life."

So they took her to a fashionable resort, where she became the famous beauty of the hour. The quiet life of artistic study and effort was forgotten, and Lalage dressed, danced, and fluttered through her hours like the crowds of other belles she saw around her. She was surrounded with admirers, and laughed as they came and went; only when any man seemed to love her she immediately kept herself out of his way. A word or look of love afflicted her, and she kept all such troubles aloof.

After some time, however, it happened that a lover who loved her truly found an opportunity to force his suit upon her; the semblance of forgetfulness was torn away, the chord of pain was touched, and Lalage wept all that night, and said wearily next day:

"Isn't there somewhere else, dear aunt, where we could go? I should like to see the Holy Land."

And so thither they went, and Lalage was satisfied again in a fashion of her own. With feverish eagerness she pursued her way from one storied spot to another of the wonderful little country of Palestine. After she had visited every corner of it, and fitted carefully into its scenery all the marvellous events that happened there, she settled down into a quiet corner to think her own thoughts about it all; and during this time she seemed to live in a sort of dream of peace; only as the calm days passed over her head she grew visibly thinner and whiter. At last one day she was suddenly struck with her own wan looks in the glass, and cried out, asking to be taken home.

"I want to see the park," she said, "and the old fountain. I want to hear the nightingales again."

They hurried home with her, hurried rather too much, for they arrived at a harsher season than was safe for a creature so frail. The winds gave her a rough welcome, and Lalage lay on her bed waiting

for them to go by, and waiting for the nightingales to sing. And the winds went by, and the nightingales sang, but there was no Lalage to heed them any more.

Nevertheless, the roses bloomed as luxuriantly, the fountain tinkled as pleasantly that summer, as if the girl's light steps had been coming and going among them.

It was in the flush of autumn, when the woods were looking their loveliest, that Lord Arlington found his way back to the little quiet out-of-the-way village at the gates of Castle Strange. It was only three years since he had been there before, and he was not changed in outward appearance; but he told himself, as he walked through the mossy alleys, that the time had been weary with him all the days and months of absence, and that he had been a fool to keep away from this enchanted spot so long.

"How will she greet me?" he asked himself. "Will she be cold or tender, haughty or kind? Ah, I have learnt her worth, and I will humble myself to the very dust to win her back!"

Mrs. L'Estrange was seated alone in a corner of the great drawing-room. A book was on her knee, but her weary old head was buried in a cushion. Her years had weighed heavily upon her of late, all occupations had fallen from her hands, and she was wont to doze away the still afternoons trying to forget her grief, "sleeping for sorrow."

She had been dreaming of Lalage's happy days, and when Lord Arlington's entrance startled her, his presence seemed only a continuation of her dream.

He was too agitated by his own position to notice her silence and her troubled looks, but taking her passive hand, bent and kissed it with a contrite air, while he poured out his greetings, his regrets, and his hopes into her ear.

"I made a bitter mistake," he said, "and I have suffered for it; and now I have come to throw myself on her mercy, to crave her pardon. If she will only listen to me, I will strive to make up for my fault by the love and service of my whole lifetime."

"You have come back to marry Lalage?" said the old lady dreamily.

"Give me some hope," said Lord Arlington. "I cannot live without her."

"That was what she thought," said Mrs. L'Estrange, "that she could not live with-

out you. She did not say so, but we saw it in her face."

"Thank Heaven!" said the lover; "then I am not forgotten. Tell me, dear lady, when and where can I find Lalage?"

The poor old lady looked at him vaguely. This last blow seemed to overturn her mind a little.

"Lalage?" she said. "Where is Lalage? She is down by the old fountain, where she always loved to be. Lalage is down by the old fountain."

"A thousand thanks!" cried Lord Arlington joyfully, and taking a hasty farewell he hurried out of the castle, and made for the old favourite haunt with a throbbing heart.

"Where we first met," he said to himself as he went along, "there shall we meet again."

He was infinitely relieved at having been received so gently by Mrs. L'Estrange. No coldness, no reproach. The way had indeed been made easy for him.

He arrived at the well-remembered spot, lifted the boughs of the trees, and saw no one, stepped out on the grass, and saw the place quite deserted.

"Lalage!" he called softly, but nothing stirred. The water in the fountain murmured, the breeze moved the trees, but no other sound broke the tranquil stillness. The deep colouring of the wild garden, the sunny silence, the sweet half-melancholy that reigned around and had used to charm her won upon him, and seeming almost part of herself, made him long more impatiently to behold her appear. Tired of waiting he again parted the drooping boughs, when his foot struck against something in his way.

There, sheltered by the trees and covered with moss and flowers, was a narrow mound, and above the mound was a cross, and upon the cross was one word: "Lalage."

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